

Trip Report: The Yorkshire 3 Peaks

Date: 10th September 2011

Group: Mike A (leader), Les A, Jim G, Colin, Chris S, Ben (guest)

Route: Horton-in-Ribblesdale - Pen-y-ghent (694m) - Whernside (736m) - Ingleborough (723m) - Horton-in-Ribblesdale

Total Distance: 23 miles

Total Ascent: 5250 ft

Weather: Breezy with squally showers

Time: 9 hours 30 mins

Our party was made up somewhat differently from the enthusiastic squad that had originally signed up some months ago. 4 had fallen by the wayside with a variety of excuses, to be replaced by 2 relatively inexperienced young bloods, who were also relatively hardy, opting to spend the 2 nights in a soggy tent rather than the comparative luxury of The Crown Hotel complete with prepaid deposit!

The Bunbury party travelled up on Friday afternoon in a relaxed state, in fact so relaxed that the leader failed to spot the tiny junction of the M65 which he was intending to take. Despite a detour via Kirby Lonsdale the journey was only just over 2 hours and we arrived in plenty of time to sample the cloudy Timothy Taylor Landlord at the rival hostelry. Despite the dodgy ale we returned later to take on board their chilli, a perfect preparation for the arduous task ahead of us.

The young guns were travelling from Leicester and endured a grim journey of over 5 hours, so that as we were making our way back to The Crown at 8.30, they had only just got their tent erected and were cooking their meal. Not the perfect preparation for the arduous task ahead.

Despite the forecast of gale force winds and horizontal rain, conditions at 07.00 on Saturday consisted of mere blustery winds and drizzle. We met up with Chris and Ben outside the café at 07.30 as planned but the amazing sight was the hundreds of horaces also milling around ready to start the challenge. We had somehow managed to coincide with a major charity event and as a result we were assisted in route finding by some marshalling and one or two signs, but on the other hand we could hardly make our way up Pen-y-ghent due to blockages by the less than fit charity walkers who were all over the path.

We arrived at the summit of Pen-y-ghent which was shrouded in wet clag and wet charity walkers and made our way off to the north west in search of Ribblesdale viaduct. This is a section of about 6 miles which is notoriously boggy even in dry conditions. Judging by the river levels in Horton, it seemed as if there had been non-stop rain for 2 months and

consequently Jim was in no time at all labelling this the "Bog trot of the year". A little harsh but probably true.

Our first official food stop was at Nether Lodge which is post bog and marks the beginning of a 2 mile tarmac section to Ribbleshead viaduct at 9.5 miles. Here, the first signs of human frailty were showing as Colin and Lesley both removed their footwear in search of blisters. Dry socks and plasters were administered in a fruitless attempt to avoid future pain.

The second target of Wharfedale was now fully in view, the clag having just cleared the summit, and it was turning into a decent day. In fact the sun even made an appearance during the gentle 5 mile trudge up to the trig point. There were superb views back to Ribbleshead and over to Pen-y-ghent but sadly a squall sprung up as we arrived so we made a hasty exit towards the steepest descent of the day. Nevertheless we were now over half way round the route, so psychologically we were in very good shape.

Mike A

At the foot of Wharfedale, heading towards Chapel-Le Dale, we had our second authorised food and faff stop where Chris and Ben tucked into the remains of their previous night's hash. It must have tasted better than it looked. The rest of the party enjoyed more traditional mountain food such as pork pies and jelly babies. More plasters and pads were administered to Colin and Lesley and pain killers to Chris who had developed a sore knee but was not complaining nearly as loudly as some members of the party.

The final summit of the day, Ingleborough, was now looming very large and although it is only 7 miles up and down, it is not so easy with over 16 miles already in the legs. The ascent of Ingleborough has a very steep section and some of the charity walkers were seriously struggling up on their hands and knees, grinding to a halt unexpectedly and hindering the

BUMS who were striding up just as if walking up Wyche Road to the Dysart..... er, well we got to the top eventually.

The 4 mile descent back to Horton proved to be the most difficult part of the day, with only Jim and Ben pain free. I'm afraid we were not at our best with blisters and gammy knees hampering progress. Colin must have been in pain with his blistered little toe; either that or his "squealing like a girl" was a serious case of attention seeking.

Having said that, we achieved a time of about 9hours 30 mins, which is not bad considering the target is to complete the route in less than 12 hours. This information was shouted from the rooftops by Lesley at anyone who cared to listen during the evening's rehydration therapy. As there were lots of horaces who had fallen short of her time, this made her very happy. Not as if she's competitive though!

Mike